

# Letter from Taizé

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APRIL - MAY 1987 / 2

## Ljubljana

1 - 3 May

Preparations are already beginning in Ljubljana. At the first meeting of the preparation group someone said, "When we have the meeting this Spring in our city, I hope that we will be able to give as much to those who come as I received in the neighbourhood of London where we were welcomed during the European Meeting. It will be an opportunity to share ourselves and our situation with people of other countries."

The Slovenes are very much looking forward to the meeting. The prospect of welcoming others has given rise to enthusiasm. Thanks to the invitation from the Church in Ljubljana, a large number of young adults from both East and West will be able to come together to pray and share for the first time.

Slovenia, on the "sunny side of the Alps" is the northernmost republic of Yugoslavia. Christians there have retained many treasures of popular tradition of prayer, particularly in songs and hymns. Like all other cities, rapid changes in the way of life bring up new questions for Christians. For example, it is a country where differences are very marked: several different languages and cultures existing within Yugoslavia. Everyone is conscious of their own cultural identity and there are very many families from the southern republics who have come to Slovenia to live and work.

(more details on page 3)

In four months time, the Intercontinental meetings will begin. For these meetings to be a real opportunity to create trust across the earth, one can prepare for them by trying to discover what nourishes an inner life, for example by re-reading the letter "Living Springs". One of the things of which we were reminded by the London Meeting is that trust between persons and peoples is often won by faithfulness to commitments that are humble or even hidden. The meeting in Ljubljana is bound to stimulate us further.

## Pilgrimage to London

What characterizes a pilgrim? Being ready to set out? Being ready to leave one's home and to become a stranger? Praying for much of the day and the night? Going constantly from one place to another and even eating standing up in the face of the wind? Trying to recognize the presence of God in every person encountered? Setting off homeward again, with a desire to carry on searching?

The long journey that most people had to make, with the difficult Channel crossing, was a pilgrimage in itself. There were prayers of departure, prayers during the journey, before the night-time crossing and early morning arrival in Central London.

This message addressed to a group in Basel, Switzerland was a very appropriate send-off:

*continued on page 4*



London: twice a day, prayers in four churches, for instance here in St. Paul's Cathedral (left) and in Westminster Cathedral





During these days, as we continue our Pilgrimage of Trust on Earth, we would like to understand how it is that the essential answers grow out of an inner life. Perhaps we think we have nothing, or almost nothing for building up an inner life. But each one of us, with a simple heart, a humble heart, can put to use all our interior gifts and a kind of warm hearth of trust will be created around us.

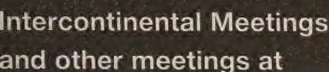
Nothing vast can be undertaken without maturation. A vast cause needs time. Perhaps, on account of Christ and the Gospel, it needs our whole lifetime. In these few days in London, we are only beginning our search for an inner life. Time is needed to grow into this search.

An inner life can be recognized by, among other things, the fact that it renders us more human. Without implying any kind of slackness, it doesn't make someone rigid. It calls upon all the strength we have in us. Yes, an inner life can make us more human.

When you return home, wherever you are: in the street, at work, at home, you will be seeking to live in communion with the Risen Christ. One thing is certain: By his Holy Spirit, God wants always to give us an inner peace. When worries arise, one can say to oneself: let your anxieties float by, let them pass like little clouds in your life, do not be afraid: in God there is a road which mounts up towards serene joy, and a dwelling-place in the lands of joyfulness.

from Brother Roger's words in London

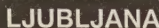




# Taizé

## PRACTICAL DETAILS

Return fares: £68 adult, £58 youth (13-26 yrs), £35 child (4-12 yrs)  
Book in advance. All details from: FRANK HARRIS COACHES Ltd, Manor Road, West Thurrock, GRAYS, Essex RM16 1EH. Tel: Purfleet (0708) 864911



1-3 May

These contributions cover the costs of the meeting, including meals and a travel pass. Those who wish can contribute more to the solidarity fund.

(with post code and country)

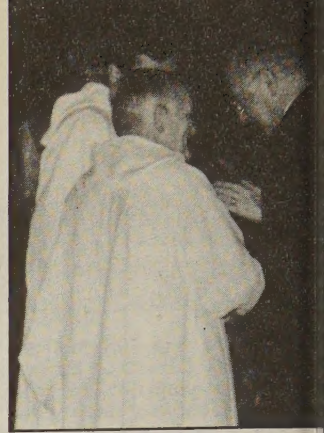
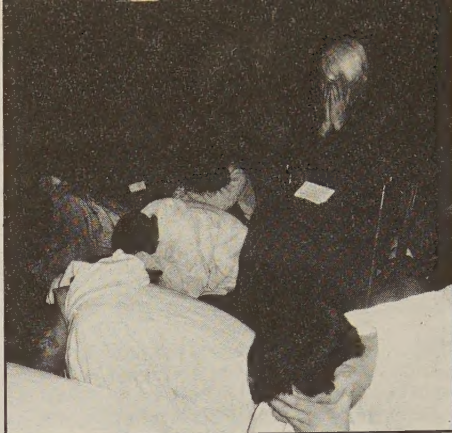
Please circle "Yes" or "No":

● I have been to Taizé: Yes/No (Last stay: month ..... year.....)





# ...London



The tents for meal distribution next to Westminster Abbey ■ The prayer around the cross with Cardinal Hume ■ The Archbishop of Canterbury was present at one of the prayers

*continued from page 1*

"You are ready to leave all that is familiar to undertake this pilgrimage to London. You know only what you leave behind; what lies ahead, you know only in the dreams of your imagination and the hopes of your heart.

Setting out — that is the sign by which believers are identified. Abraham, we know, believed more in God's promises than in his own experiences of the past.

The people of Bethlehem also had to venture out to see the child in the manger.

Whoever ventures finds God.

So do not fix your thoughts upon your journey. You are travelling so that God may arrive with you at your destination.

Receive gladly all the friendship which you are offered, whether it is offered joyfully or reservedly.

When you meet someone, give them what you have been given by Christ.

Angels go with you.

I wish you eyes that are open to see them, the silence needed to hear their whisper, and the humility to become an angel for others."

## PILGRIMS AND FRIENDS

It is as pilgrims that all were greeted by the Archbishop of Canterbury during a prayer in St Paul's Cathedral:

"Friends and Fellow Pilgrims — it gives me great happiness to be with you in prayer tonight, to share in your joy, simplicity and mercy. These are three qualities of life an Archbishop needs just as much as the ordinary believer if he is to become a true disciple, a follower in the way of Jesus.

A pilgrimage needs companionship. When I see pilgrims coming week by week to Canterbury, I notice that the best of them help the weakest among them, sometimes the children, the handicapped and the lonely. I pray that these days in London will provide you with memories that will renew your faith and in some cases maybe change the direction of your lives..."

So many thousands of pilgrims in London could not pass unnoticed, for example, the buses or tube stations that resounded with songs in all languages. But even more than the visible, exterior signs such as the marquees pitched outside Westminster Abbey for the meal distribution, what touched the Londoners was the multitude of personal encounters. By the invitations to stay that so many families had made, by

the meetings for discussion and sharing in neighbourhoods throughout London, thousands of people had a completely new experience:

"During the preparation, I was worried at first because there seemed to be so much to do and not very much time. It took a little while to encourage people in the district to become involved and it seemed we wouldn't be able to welcome many people. But then it was like a miracle and families began to offer their homes and we were able to welcome fifty to the parish. I found my doubts disappear when I simply let myself entrust to God the frustrations and fears which built up and seemed to block the way. I was helped by the attitude of trust shown by those who arrived here on the first morning, tired and wanting to sleep after a long journey and often not speaking my language. I was inspired too, by the open and joyful spirit that accompanied the week here."

"Now the meeting is over, I have spoken to those who were hosts, and they have said how good it has been, how much they feel they were given by the young people. And one of our German girls said, 'Here in New Malden you are all young! (when we said a lot of those helping with the welcome were older people).'"

## A CROWD IN SILENCE

Never before have we held the prayer for a meeting simultaneously in four churches, rather than just two or three. Despite this dispersion, the prayer had a remarkable density especially when, each evening, the icon of the cross was laid down and people gathered around in order to confide in silence their suffering, both theirs and that of all humanity. Many were struck by the sight, on December 30, of the Archbishop of Canterbury, a Roman Catholic bishop, an Orthodox Metropolitan, the Moderator of the Free Church Federal Council and other church leaders kneeling down together around the cross.

On the 1st of January there was quite a different sort of prayer: a prayer with children. "In Tottenham, north London, a large group of children had done everything themselves. It was quite something to see, at the beginning of the prayer, those black, white and Asian children portraying scenes from the Gospel of the Nativity, while two of them, Mary and Joseph, went

all around the church which was full of the young people who were staying in the area. After that, there was the reading of the story of Samuel which, because it was read by a child, enabled us to listen with fresh ears: "Speak Lord, your servant is listening." Finally, at the end of the prayer, and this was a moving moment, the children came up to light their candles at the cross and then took it back to their parents so they could return home and pray there too. One could see the wonderment on the faces of the children and on adults' faces too, and then we went on spontaneously singing Christmas carols in different languages."

## HIDDEN HOPE

Morning visits all over London were times of discovery, often of painful realities, but also of hidden hope. Again in Tottenham:

"In Tottenham, tensions run high between the blacks and the whites since the bloody riots. We went to visit a neighbourhood where recently a black woman was beaten to death in her home and where a young policeman was knifed. At the black youth centre there was surprise and suspicion at the arrival on the doorstep of a gang of young whites from different countries. Explaining the Pilgrimage of Trust and the idea of our visit, we were soon let in. Tensions eased and we were warmly welcomed by some of the young blacks who explained to us the situation of their neighbourhood."

There were many other encounters that bridged cultural or racial differences. "In our area, on January 1st, Bengali families from nearby came and cooked up a traditional meal in the church hall. We shared food but the sharing was deeper. It was a step from mistrust towards trust — for one of the couples took the risk of bringing their teenage son who had been beaten several times by whites and whose attitude before the meal was one of suspicion and fear. To see him there was one of the little miracles of the pilgrimage of trust."

Stories like this underline the fact that, right from the beginning of the local preparation of the London Meeting, one of the most important points was to sow seeds of trust and reconciliation. The pilgrims who came empty-handed, bringing only themselves, discovered that they had contributed to a surge of joy and hope for many others.



When Jesus talks to his disciples about his impending death (Jn 14-16), which will in reality be a departure to pass from this world to the Father, he reveals the ultimate and definitive gift that God will make of his love: he will give the Holy Spirit to stay with believers forever (Jn 14.16).

Jesus gives the Holy Spirit two names. One of which is the "Protector" (or "Paraclete", "Advocate", "Intercessor") of those who are slandered, accused or on the point of being condemned; thus the Defender is also the Spirit of "consolation" or the "comforting" Spirit, which is often translated. Jesus also names the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of truth, the only one who can reveal the mystery of Christ and the mystery of our life which is made to be lived in communion with God.

No human being can escape the hard experience of often finding themselves condemned by the Law of God or by their own conscience. Christ, by taking away the sin of the world, has put an end to this condemnation once and for all. Where there is Christ, our Protector and Consoler (1 Jn 2.1), there is a love free from fear. Freed from all fear of punishment by God, Christians are nevertheless exposed to accusations. When it is, in the midst of threats or even persecution, that the Holy Spirit pleads our cause and becomes "another Protector" (Jn 14.16). When confronted by calumny, the Holy Spirit makes a response of forgiveness well up within us. Faced by bad conscience, which is often simply a perfidious inner prolongation of accusations from without, the Spirit reminds us who we are in truth: the well beloved children of God. When the way of forgiveness and self-giving is called into question by the harshness of the refusal that faces us, the Holy Spirit enlightens our hearts with the unique truth of Christ.

The light of the Spirit of truth is particularly necessary in all that concerns "sin, justice and judgement" (Jn 16.8). For discussions about the evil in humanity can lead quickly to condemning without delivering from evil. The Holy Spirit, on the contrary, brings sin out into the light without condemning with hasty judgements. The Spirit throws light upon that fine point of the inner life where a human being chooses between trusting and refusing (Jn 16.9).

**1 Fri**Ezekiel 18.27-32  
Colossians 3.8-11

A third time, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" Peter was hurt that he asked him a third time, "Do you love me?" and said, "Lord, you know everything; you know I love you." **John 21.15-17**

**2 Sat**Ez 34.11-16  
Jn 21.18-25

Save us, Lord our God, gather us from among the nations, that we may give thanks to your holy name. **Ps 106.1-12,43-48**

**3 SUN**Acts 2.22-28,33  
Luke 24.13-35

Through Christ you now have faith in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory for this very purpose — that your faith and hope should be in God.

**1 Peter 1.17-21****4 Mon**Ez 34.22-31  
Jn 3.22-36a

May the peace of Christ reign in your hearts, because it is for this that you were called together in one body. Live in thankfulness.

**Col 3.12-17****5 Tue**Ez 36.25-28  
Col 4.2-6

Jesus said to the Samaritan woman: If you only knew what God is offering and who it is that is saying to you, "Give me something to drink," you would have been the one to ask, and he would have given you living water.

**Jn 4.1-14****6 Wed**Ez 37.12-14  
Jn 4.14-24

Paul writes: I am continually giving thanks to God for you, because of the love he has given you in Christ Jesus.

**1 Corinthians 1.1-10****7 Thu**1 Cor 1.17-25  
Jn 4.25-34

The Lord says: I shall make a covenant of peace with my people, an eternal covenant; I shall set my sanctuary among them for ever.

**Ez 37.23-28****8 Fri**Ez 47.1-12  
Jn 4.35-42

God chose the weak things of the world to confound the strong. He chose the lowly and the things that are scorned.

**1 Cor 1.26-31****9 Sat**

Daniel 2.20-22

At the empty tomb, the women were met by two angels who said, "Why do you look for the living among the dead?" **Lk 24.1-12**

**10 SUN**Acts 2.36-41  
Jn 10.1-10

When Christ suffered he made no threats. Instead he entrusted himself to the One who judges justly. He bore our sins in his own body on the cross, so that we might die to our sins and live for uprightness.

**1 Peter 2.20-25****11 Mon**Dn 3.23-26,46-50  
Jn 4.46-53

Paul writes: I did not come among you with eloquence or wise argument to announce the mystery of God. I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ, Jesus Christ crucified, so that your faith might rest not on human wisdom but on the power of God.

**1 Cor 2.1-9****12 Tue**1 Cor 2.10-16  
Jn 5.1-9

O you who are faithful and humble in heart, bless the Lord: sing his praises for ever! **Dn 3.51-52,85-89**

**13 Wed**Dn 6.27-28 Jn 5.19-23  
**1 Cor 3.1-9**

God is our refuge and strength, an ever present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, even though the earth be in turmoil.

**Ps 46****14 Thu**Dn 7.13-14  
1 Cor 3.10-16

Jesus said: Whoever listens to my words and believes in the one who sent me has passed from death to life.

**Jn 5.24-29a****15 Fri**1 Cor 3.18-23  
Jn 5.30-37a

Daniel prayed, saying: And now, our God, hear the prayer of your servant. We call out to you, not because we are righteous, but because of your great mercy.

**Dn 9.17-19****16 Sat**

Hosea 2.16-22

Risen from the dead, Jesus came and stood among his disciples and said: Peace be with you!

**Lk 24.36-39****17 SUN**Ac 6.1-7  
Jn 14.1-12

Peter writes: As you come to Christ, you are being built, like living stones, into a spiritual house.

**1 P 2.4-9****18 Mon**Ho 6.1-6  
Jn 5.41,43-44

Paul writes: Do not judge anything before its time, wait till the Lord comes.

**1 Cor 4.1-5****19 Tue**Ho 10.12  
1 Cor 4.6b-13

Jesus said: The words I say to you are not just my own. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work.

**Jn 14.10b-14****20 Wed**Ho 11.1-4  
1 Cor 4.14-17

Jesus said: The Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.

**Jn 14.23-26****21 Thu**Ho 11.7-9  
Jn 14.27-29

Paul writes: Time is limited, and from now on those who buy something should live as if they did not possess and those who use the things of the world should live without being engrossed in them.

**1 Cor 7.29-31****22 Fri**Ho 14.2-6  
**1 Cor 9.16-23**

Jesus said: Remain in me, as I remain in you. Just as a branch cannot bear fruit by itself without being attached to the vine, neither can you unless you remain in me.

**Jn 15.1-5****23 Sat**

Amos 5.4-24

Jesus said: This is my commandment: love each other as I have loved you.

**Jn 15.7-12****24 SUN**Ac 8.5-8,14-17  
Jn 14.15-21

Peter writes: Have no fear. Simply proclaim the Lord Christ holy in your hearts, and always be ready to answer people who ask you the reason for the hope that you have.

**1 Pet 3.15-18****25 Mon**Am 7.12-15  
1 Cor 9.24-27

Jesus said: There is no greater love than giving one's life for those one loves.

**Jn 15.13-17****26 Tue**Am 8.11  
**Matthew 28.1-8**

Paul writes: God is faithful; he will not allow you to be tempted beyond your strength. But when you are tempted, he will provide a way forward for you, and the means to stand up under it.

**1 Cor 10.1-13****27 Wed**1 Cor 10.16-17  
Mt 28.9-15

The Lord says: I will pour out my Spirit upon all humanity.

**Joël 3.1-5****28 Thu**Ac 1.1-11  
Ephesians 1.17-23

ASCENSION Jesus said: I am with you always, to the end of time.

**Mt 28.16-20****29 Fri**Jonas 2.2-10  
Jn 15.18-21

Paul writes: Let no one seek their own interest, but rather the interests of others. Whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

**1 Cor 10.23-24,31-11.1****30 Sat**Micah 2.12-13  
**1 Cor 11.23-26**

I say to the Lord: You are my refuge, my share in the land of the living!

**Ps 142****31 SUN**Ac 1.12-14  
Jn 17.1-11

Peter wrote: Insofar as you share the suffering of Christ, rejoice, when his glory is revealed, you also will be in joy and gladness.

**1 P 4.13-16**

*These short readings, taken from the midday prayer in Taizé, can be read several times during the day. The references indicate longer readings. If you have time to read only one, the underlined one is suggested. The reference in italics shows the source of the short reading.*



**1 Mon** Micah 4.1-4  
John 15.26-16.4  
There are many different gifts, but it is always the same Spirit; there are many different ways of serving, but it is always the same Lord. There are many forms of activity, but in everybody it is the same God who is at work in them all.

**1 Corinthians 12.1-6**

**2 Tue** Mi 5.1-4a  
**1 Cor 12.7-11**  
Jesus said: When the Spirit of truth comes, he will lead you to the complete truth, since he will not be speaking of his own accord, but will say only what he has been told.

Jn 16.5-15

**3 Wed** Mi 6.1-5  
Jn 16.23-23a  
Just as the body is one, while having many members, so it is with Christ.

**1 Cor 12.12-22**

**4 Thu** 1 Cor 12.26-31  
Jn 16.23b-33  
This is what the Lord wants of you: only to do what is right, to love goodness, and to walk humbly with your God.

**Mi 6.6-8**

**5 Fri** Mi 7.18-20  
Jn 17.1-8  
Love is patient and kind, love is not jealous, nor boastful, nor conceited. Love does not seek its own advantage, it does not take offence or store up grievances. Love does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but finds its joy in the truth.

**1 Cor 13.1-7**

**6 Sat** Romans 8.22-27  
Jesus cried out: If anyone is thirsty, let them come to me; let anyone who believes in me come and drink!

**Jn 7.37-39**

**7 SUN** Acts 2.1-11  
**1 Cor 12.3-7,12-13**  
PENTECOST  
The Risen Christ breathed upon his disciples and said to them: Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone's sins they are forgiven.

**Jn 20.19-23**

**8 Mon** Ac 2.14-21  
Jn 3.1-8  
The Lord is good. He recognizes those whose trust is in him even in times of disaster.

**Nahum 1.7-8a**

**9 Tue** Habakkuk 1.2-3,12-13, 2.1-4  
Ac 2.36-41  
Jesus prayed to his Father for his disciples, saying: Keep those you have given me true to your name, so that they may be one like us.

**Jn 17.9-17**

**10 Wed** Leviticus 19.1-2,15-18  
Jn 17.18-26  
All the believers held everything in common: they sold their goods and possessions and shared the proceeds according to the needs of each person.

**Ac 2.42-47**

**11 Thu** Lv 19.33-34  
Ac 3.1-10  
Jesus, realizing that they were about to come and take him by force and make him king, fled to the hills alone.

**Jn 6.1-15**

**12 Fri** Ac 3.13-15,17-21  
Jn 6.16-21  
The Lord said to his people: I will establish my dwelling among you, I will be your God and you will be my people.

**Lv 26.11-13**

**13 Sat** Numbers 6.22-26  
Ac 4.13-21  
Lord, you look upon the humble. Though I live surrounded by trouble you give me life.

**Ps 138**

**14 SUN** Exodus 34.4-6,8-9  
2 Cor 13.11-13  
God did not send his Son into the world to judge the world, but so that the world might be saved through him.

**Jn 3.16-18**

**15 Mon** Nb 11.24-29  
Jn 6.22-27  
Paul writes: These three things remain: faith, hope and love; and the greatest of them is love.

**1 Cor 13.8-13**

**16 Tue** Nb 12.1-8  
**1 Cor 15.1-11**  
The people asked Jesus, "What must we do to do the work of God?" Jesus replied, "The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent."

**Jn 6.28-35**

**17 Wed** Nb 23.7-12  
1 Cor 15.12-20  
Jesus said: I have come from heaven not to do my own will but the will of the one who sent me.

**Jn 6.37-40**

**18 Thu** Deuteronomy 4.12,29-31  
1 Cor 15.21-28  
Jesus said: I am the bread of life.

**Jn 6.41-50**

**19 Fri** Dt 6.4-9  
Jn 6.60-69  
Paul writes: Stand firm, let nothing shake you, be always abounding in energy for the work of God, being sure that in the Lord none of your labour is wasted.

**1 Cor 15.42-58**

**20 Sat** Jn 7.14-18  
Moses said to the people: The Lord set his heart on you and chose you not because you were the most numerous of all peoples, but it was out of love for you, and to keep his promise to your forefathers that the Lord saved you from the land of slavery.

**Dt 7.7-9**

**21 SUN** Dt 8.2-3,14-16  
1 Cor 10.16-17  
Jesus said: Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise them up on the last day.

**Jn 6.51-58**

**22 Mon** Dt 10.12-19  
Jn 7.24-30  
The whole group of believers was united in heart and mind. No one claimed private ownership of any possessions, but everything they had was held in common.

**Ac 4.32-35**

**23 Tue** Ac 5.12-21  
Jn 7.37-44  
Moses said: Be openhanded toward your neighbour, toward the poor and needy in your land.

**Dt 15.7-11**

**24 Wed** Luke 1.57-66,80  
Jn 8.1-11  
ST JOHN THE BAPTIST  
I thought to myself, "My toil has been futile; I have exhausted myself for nothing, to no purpose." Yet all the while my cause was with the Lord, and my reward with my God.

**Isaiah 49.1-6**

**25 Thu** Ac 5.27-33  
Jn 8.12-16  
Moses said to the people: What I command you today is not too difficult for you, nor beyond your reach. The word is very near you, it is on your lips and in your heart for you to act upon it.

**Dt 30.11-14**

**26 Fri** Dt 30.19-20a  
Ac 5.34-42  
Jesus said: The one who sent me is with me. He has not left me alone, for I always do what pleases him.

**Jn 8.26b-30**

**27 Sat** Ac 6.12-15, 7.55-60  
Moses said: The Lord your God walks with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you.

**Dt 31.6-8**

**28 SUN** 2 Kings 4.8-16  
Matthew 10.37-42  
Paul writes: Count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus.

**Rm 6.3-4,8-11**

**29 Mon** Ac 12.1-11  
2 Tim. 4.6-8,17-18  
SS PETER AND PAUL  
Peter said to Jesus: "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." Jesus replied, "Simon son of Jonah, you are a blessed man! For this was revealed to you, not by man, but by my Father in heaven."

**Mt 16.13-19**

**30 Tue** Dt 32.1-4  
Ac 9.1-9  
Jesus said: If you make my word your home, you will indeed be my disciples; you will come to know the truth, and the truth will set you free.

**Jn 8.31-36**

Never does the Holy Spirit reveal sin without also manifesting the forgiveness and new life which God gives. The Protected makes apparent that the way of Christ, who goes away to his Father by giving his life out of love, is the true way (Jn 16.10). He whispers in our heart: Remember the Risen Christ, he your justice, within you he loves and does the will of the Father. As for the judgement of God, it is not the condemnation of human beings but their liberation, for it is the overturning of the "prince of this world", of the power of evil (Jn 16.11). The Spirit makes clear that henceforth every human being belongs in reality, whatever their appearances may be, to Christ.

The spirit of truth "does not speak of his own accord" (Jn 16.13), his teaching is simple and humble, "reminding" us of the words of Jesus (14.26). But why should the Spirit have to remind us of them when we can read them again and again in the Gospels? It is because the Spirit fulfils the promise of an inward teaching, immediate and permanent, which is written on human hearts and which changes them (Jeremiah 31.33). Jesus did not turn his words into a doctrine to be given over to the scribes. He did not write anything, except in the dust on the ground (Jn 8.6). He did not promise anyone possession of the truth, but, to those who believe, this greater gift: to be led at every moment by his Spirit, "to the complete truth" (Jn 16.13).

It is enough, therefore, to listen to what the Spirit is giving the Church to understand daily by day, for the Spirit "will teach everything" (Jn 14.26). Trusting in the Holy Spirit, John the Apostle wrote to the churches in his care, "As for you, the anointing (of the Spirit of Christ) you received remains in you and you do not need anyone to teach you; since the anointing he gave you teaches you everything, and it is true not false, remain in him just as it has taught you" (1 Jn 2.27). For each person, the gift of the Holy Spirit comes to fulfil the promise of the prophet, "There will be no further need for everyone to teach their neighbour saying 'Learn to know the Lord!', for they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest" (Jeremiah 31.34). What remains for us to encourage one another to be attentive and readily available for the whisper of the Holy Spirit in our hearts which can be recognised by its conformity to the teaching of Christ and the apostles.



# Entrusted to one another

Several young Europeans spent part of last summer far from home. They had been asked to go, two by two, to visit parishes, communities and other young people on three continents: in India, Sri Lanka and Pakistan, in Zaire and Cameroon, and in Mexico. Leaving home in this way, accepting the risk of being disoriented in a new world, makes us more attentive to the words of Christ: "Take no purse or sack with you... When you enter a house, say: Peace to this house! Remain in that house, eating and drinking what is put before you..." (Luke 10).

Here is what the two young people who went to Cameroon had to say: "A young woman, a catechist, had invited us to a meal at her home. When we arrived, we found a house decorated with a large garland of flowers at the entrance, little children who had practised a song and... about thirty friends or neighbours who had come to welcome us around a banquet table! We had to leave that house early to go visit a choir in a little village in the bush. There, in a chapel in the middle of the forest, late at night, twenty young people had been waiting a long time for us; they gave us a concert of songs composed by one of them that told the life of Christ."

The simplicity and the warmth of the welcome made it seem as if they were returning to their own home, and that is undoubtedly one of the meanings of the Gospel text quoted above: don't worry, on the one hand it is as if you will be welcomed by your own relatives; they will take care of you. This trust is even more touching when it comes from people who only yesterday were strangers. Such experiences help us understand that we are entrusted to one another, whether close by or far away. It is exactly such a trust — between young people of different continents — that we want to discover in the Intercontinental Meetings at Taizé this summer.

Here are some examples, drawn from the accounts of journeys, of what these new relationships can mean. In reading these letter excerpts, many will recognize familiar situations. Those in other contexts can also ask themselves what these experiences can help them discover in their own day-to-day lives.

## DISCOVERING OTHERS

Being entrusted to one another means first of all listening, but in a deeper way: "In leaving for Africa, I didn't know what would be most necessary: to be in good shape physically, to have the ability and the desire to meet others...? But in fact, the little seed

of faith was the most important thing in every meeting, stronger even than my intellectual abilities. I learned to arrive with empty hands and to let myself be welcomed. I learned to waste no time getting to the heart of the matter in each encounter: seeing the presence of Christ in the other person, and becoming as transparent as possible myself so that the other could also discover that presence in me. I could not remain an outside observer, and I was astonished myself to see how passionately interested I became in discovering the Church, how deeply this search touched me."

This same desire to listen impels us to go meet others even in places where visits from strangers are extremely rare: "To understand better the identity of these 'tribes' in the Ranchi region of India, we had to go further and look for their roots in the villages. Three young people went along with us to spend a few days in the villages. After taking a bus, we had to finish our journey on foot or on a tractor along roads that had been washed out by the rainy season. We discovered very poor villages, already Christian for a century. The Church there is very active, with schools and dispensaries. Going to the 5.30 am Mass in a tiny village is really something! The people had come a great distance in spite of the rain and the Church was full; the atmosphere was simple and prayerful."

## WHAT CHRISTIAN COMMUNITIES?

Being attentive to the problems and needs of others is a way of experiencing more concretely that they are entrusted to us, that they count on us and expect from us support and understanding. This listening will grow as the intercontinental meetings approach, but it is important already to discover the priorities. In Cameroon, for example, the formation of Christian communities is one of these priorities: "The desire to train lay leaders and to spread the Gospel is a constant concern of all those with responsibilities. In the South, for example, in the tiny villages along the forest trails, worship in the chapels is ensured by catechists; a priest comes only twice or three times a year. A training centre has existed for the past two years in order to improve the Biblical and liturgical knowledge of these lay people who are in charge of the parishes. Three times each year they leave their families and their plantations for a week-long programme in which they deepen their faith."

In the life of parishes, many small communities are being created in order to deepen the communion. In Zaire, for example, they are called "living Church communities": "In a single parish there can be as many as fifteen of these communities. People meet together once or twice a week to pray, to share around a Bible text and to look together for concrete forms of involvement to support the poorest people in the district. Even though they are all poor, they always manage to help and to share with their neighbours who are most in need. Their solidarity has no limits: people are ready to give all they have."

Another priority in many countries is the struggle for development and for justice. Examples of solidarity are not lacking, and the witness of those who give themselves to the end is a real source of hope, as in Mexico: "When I think of all the people I met in that country, I feel much joy and hope. We saw so many persons who live for others, sharing the conditions of the poorest of the poor! Through these people a current of life flows that aspires to transform the suffering of the most neglected. What stuck us was that they live out this commitment as a conversion to be accomplished over and over again, like the woman in Puebla who told us: I realized that I was only giving tiny parts of my life, so why not give it all? This step is not only taken by individuals, but also by entire Christian communities. In the neighbourhoods, the small Christian communities sustain people's trust by their dynamism and perseverance. In them, solidarity and faith are deepened."

## VISIT TO INDIA: A HOPE REFLECTED BY THE CHURCH

We spent several weeks this summer visiting Christians in India, as a way of continuing the pilgrimage of Madras and of living with the people. It was a concrete image of the fact that trust is built up through small signs day by day. We asked ourselves: in a country where so many live in misery and where divisions and conflicts are so frequent, who can witness to hope where suffering and powerlessness seem to prevail? We quickly discovered that the Church reflected this hope. Many women and men see the contradictions present even in the Church but they feel called to live out faithfully their commitment in this same Church.

In a small village we met a group of young fishermen. They left their work and their nets to share their experience with us. Sitting by the sea, they told us of their struggle against the middlemen who make an 80% profit on their work. But they must struggle as well to be understood and accepted by the rest of the village. To do this they clean the streets and repair huts which had been destroyed several months ago by fire. The day of our visit they were preparing a festival in the village for August 15th. Their love for the Church, for the people of the village, and their commitment for greater justice are closely linked.

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# NEWS

## KENYA

"In a society that is very partitioned from an ethnic point of view (80 tribes) as well as religiously (more than 400 denominations just among Christians) and socially (the huge and growing gap between rich and poor), the youth of Nairobi constitute yet another kind of cast.

Their parents, who were born in the country, have retained their roots and a rural outlook. But the young people who were born in the city have no such roots, they even speak a slang language that they alone can understand, they are cut off from the adult world. Whereas their parents fill the churches to overflowing, young people begin to feel themselves strangers there and leave.

What can they expect from society? Everything seems closed off. Work places from the top to the bottom of the ladder are already occupied by young men who will not give an inch of ground for another twenty years, the few remaining posts are only open to those who use corruption.

With no work in sight, an unknown and closed society, a provocative display of wealth by an entrenched minority, the young person passes through astonishment to bitterness and all its temptations: alcohol, drugs, delinquency and, for some, to open revolt.

Nevertheless, there are signs of hope. For example, the refusal if many young people to take account of tribal barriers, affirming that they are first of all Kenyans. And a real interest for the Gospel, even if it is accompanied by a mistrust of the institutions claiming to speak in its name. And finally an incredible ingeniousness for discovering work outside the normal patterns: for example even someone who has studied may put themselves back to working with their hands and set themselves up on the pavement to make, out of almost nothing, objects needed in daily life — and that is not rare.

The most striking thing that I've noticed, perhaps, regarding young people is how open they are to the very young and small children. There are not the barriers that there are in Europe, but rather a great willingness to be with children, to listen to them, to play with them: and that's a real hope in a society in which more than 50% are less than twenty years old."

## PORTUGAL

"Every week, a small group of us go to a shanty town on the outskirts of Lisbon. Most of the people there come from Cape Verde (islands off West Africa that used to belong to Portugal). We go just to be with them, to listen and to pray together.

In Portugal, many Cape Verdeans are rejected by the rest of the population. Their families are very large. They came to Portugal because of the drought in their country. Many are building workers and they are usually paid less than the Portuguese. In the neighbourhood we go to visit there are no sewers, and electricity and water supplies are intermittent.

Around Christmas, we read the scripture text about the angels who appeared to the shepherds to tell them of Jesus' birth. Straightaway the eyes of the Cape Verdeans shone with joy, for they identified themselves with the shepherds — they were humble and practically outcast from society and yet it was to them that the good news was given first of all.

One of them once said that there was no reason to think that God has abandoned us for, he went on, God always comes to be with us like a friend whenever one of us is sick or needing help."

## SRI LANKA

From a Sri Lankan who stayed at Taizé as a volunteer:

"Three years ago, our country was hit by an explosion in which the only thing that counts is hate. The country has not been the same since. Tourist publicity proclaims it "A paradise on earth." Will that paradise ever be found again? At present, chances seem very slim. Both sides would need to lay down their arms, renounce a lot of things and be content with demanding only a few.

Who's right and who's wrong? Whatever the answer, it is innocent people who are paying the price in their daily life. Every day, there are bombs going off in buses. There are both Singhalese and Tamil refugees everywhere. We do all we can to find work for them. With thousands of other farm-workers we are faced by a difficult economic situation and we don't know how to earn our daily bread.

But we do see some signs of hope. We ask you to pray for us. Your prayer is precious: it will help our hearts to grow wide and our fear to disappear."

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We were quite often surprised by how easy it is to find reasons to fight with one another: differences of language, culture, wealth, religion. But we were often astonished too by the solidarity of other individuals and groups that struggle alongside one another. Some looked for money to pay the dowries of young people from very poor families who were getting married, others taught people to read and write at night school. It is important to realize that in all this, these people do not just give what they have left over: they share all they own.

All these examples are very hopeful but one might say that they are only "tiny" experiments. What could the Church do with only 2% of the population of India? The Church there does not cut itself off from others or oppose them; it remains within the society like the leaven in the dough. The Christian communities in the parishes know this well, since they are in daily contact with people of many different beliefs, especially Hindus and Muslims. Contacts are very friendly, and there is often a similar desire and a similar hope. In certain places you can see people of different religions come together once a week to pray.

In a conversation we had with a Church leader, we asked: What is your hope? After a moment's thought he answered: "Our hope is Christ. He alone gives meaning to all this life in the midst of the people. But sometimes discouragement prevails and it can be stronger than we are. When we look at the ancient Church of Europe, we hope to discover there a point of reference that supports and strengthens us. Sometimes, however, we see divisions and indecisions there just like over here." These words were partly a reproach but they were also an encouragement for us to return home and to live with a deep love for our Church.

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